

News Release

Education Information Services ■ 125 South Webster Street ■ P.O. Box 7841 ■ Madison, WI 53707-7841 ■ (608) 266-3559

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Contact: Patrick Gasper, DPI Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

State Superintendent appoints Digital Learning Advisory Council

Group will coordinate use of technology by schools and partners

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers has appointed a Digital Learning Advisory Council which is working to coordinate the approach to technology by Wisconsin’s entire education community—from teachers and district administrators, to private vendors, technical and four-year colleges.

“We’ve reached a point in education where skillful use of technology will have enormous payoffs in terms of every child’s readiness for further education and the workforce,” explained State Superintendent Tony Evers.

“The work of my Digital Learning Advisory Council will guide us so we can deploy technology in the best way possible to advance student learning and make schools more efficient.”

The council is crafting a digital learning plan that will serve as a blueprint for schools and their partners, such as public libraries, community organizations, and local employers, to follow in order to maximize the impact of their work—not only in making learning more meaningful and relevant for students, but also more accessible for economically disadvantaged students and more cost-effective for school districts.

The council includes teachers, technology specialists, and other representatives from public and private schools, school districts, libraries, higher education institutions, and industry. The co-chairs are Connie Erickson, director, Cooperative Educational Service Agency 11, and Mike Kerr, executive director, Wisconsin Technology Initiative. The group expects to consult with educational technology vendors as it progresses in its work.

Among the elements the council is likely to consider including in its final plan are:

- Leveraging technology for innovative instruction such as the “flipped classroom” model (where students listen to recorded lectures as their homework, while traditional “homework” is instead done in class, allowing teachers to spend more time supporting and observing students at work)
- Personalizing learning through technology that allows students to learn at their own pace and prove their mastery in multiple ways, reducing the need for “seat time” as a crude measure of student engagement
- Giving students 21st century methods to learn 21st century skills—for example, using a cloud-based application like Google Docs to practice collaborating with others
- Providing expert guidance to schools on infrastructure issues like wiring or network security, to ensure they get the most performance out of current equipment

(more)

- Coordinating a statewide educational resource portal available to any educator from his or her computer
- Ensuring broadband Internet access for economically disadvantaged students outside of class, through such solutions as expanded school hours, library and community partnerships, or programs modeled on the Comcast Internet Essentials and Connect to Complete partnerships which give discounted services and computers to families whose children qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Advocating that both teacher preparation programs and teacher licensing policies better address virtual learning methods
- Recommending school policies that allow students to utilize their own electronic devices for work purposes, as many workplaces do

Many of the plan's elements are likely to connect with other current initiatives to ensure every child a graduate ready for further education and the workforce—initiatives like Response to Intervention (a systemic approach to making sure every student has an opportunity to succeed); implementation of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts; or the state's work to create a new, balanced assessment system.

"We are transforming the way schools work," Evers noted. "Most of these goals aren't easily attained without very deliberate use of technology as part of the plan. Whether it's preparing students for the workforce, tapping into a rich source of student data, individualizing a child's education experience, or saving precious time for educators, students and teachers need modern tools to succeed."

He added, "It doesn't make sense for school districts or their partners to use their individual resources to duplicate front-end research or develop multiple, similar approaches to similar problems. That's where a statewide plan comes in."

The State Superintendent's Digital Learning Advisory Council has been meeting since April and expects to complete its work in early 2012.

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NOTE: A list of members of the State Superintendent's Digital Learning Advisory Council follows. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2011_128.pdf.

State Superintendent's Digital Learning Advisory Council

Lois Alt
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum, Instruction, Technology
D. C. Everest Area Schools

Tara Baxter
Administrator
Technology for Educational
Achievement (TEACH) Wisconsin

Marta Bechtol
Director, School Services and
Instructional Programs
Educational Communications Board

Kathy Boguszewski
Director of Instructional Technology
Janesville School District

Roxann Bornemann
District Administrator
School District of Antigo

Jim Davis
Chief Information Officer
Milwaukee Public Schools

Frank Devereaux
Technology Coach
Verona Area School District

Connie Erickson (**Co-Chair**)
Director
CESA 11

Kenneth Fasching-Varner
Assistant Professor of Education
Edgewood College

John Fischer
Director of Administration and
Research
Association of Wisconsin School
Administrators

Ann Franke
Director of Secondary Education
Eau Claire Area School District

Deborah Fugenschuh
President
Donors Forum of Wisconsin

Mary Gulbrandsen
Executive Director
Fund for Wisconsin Scholars

David Gundlach
Deputy Superintendent
Oshkosh Area Schools

Rich Halverson
Associate Professor of Educational
Leadership and Policy Analysis
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Jesse Harness
Commissioner
CESA Statewide Network

Danielle Herro
Instructional Technology Leader
Oconomowoc Area School District

John Jacobs
Director
Wisconsin eSchool Network

Dan Jacobsohn
Chief Information Officer
UW-Madison School of Education

Marge Jeffers
Executive Director
Wisconsin Association of Distance
Education Networks

Tanya Joosten
Associate Director
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Learning Technology Center

Mike Kerr (**Co-Chair**)
Executive Director
Wisconsin Technology Initiative

Lynn Koresh
SIS Coordinator
Diocese of Madison

Maira Lafayette
Education Director
Wisconsin Technical College System

Nan Linde
Administrator
Technology for Educational
Achievement (TEACH) Wisconsin

Dave Lois
Executive Director
WiscNet

Vicki Lyons
Director of Technology
La Crosse School District

Neva Moga
Education Technology Coordinator
Milwaukee Public Schools

Jim Morgan
Vice President
Wisconsin Manufacturers and
Commerce

Michele Nickels
Past Chair
Wisconsin Association of Distance
Education Networks

Dawn Nordine
Director
Wisconsin Virtual School

Kathy Onarheim
Director
The Institute at CESA 1

Carolyn Paine
PK-12 Computer Curriculum
Coordinator
Menasha Joint School District

John Pederson
Educational Technology Liaison
WiscNet

Jennifer Peterson
Library Media Specialist
Menasha Joint School District

Connie Radtke
Director
Wisconsin eSchool Network

Kathy Sanders
Library Media and Technology
Specialist
Monona Grove School District

Brad Saron
Superintendent
Cashton School District

Tim Schell
Chair
BadgerNet Converged Network
Advisory Committee

Roxanne Starks
President
Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association

Steve Thiry
Director
Chilton Public Library

Joel Verduin
Director of Technology
Wausau School District